IN THE CLAIMS:

The status and content of each claim follows.

1.   (currently amended)   A method of operating a printer, said printer comprising an array of dot printing elements extending in a first direction relative to a page to be printed and which prints at least a part of the page during relative movement between the array and the page, the array comprising a plurality of groups of elements with redundancy among the elements of the group, the method comprising,

in respect of at least one of said groups, initially commencing printing of an image using a subset of the elements in the group and, during the course of printing said image, increasing the number of elements available to print in the group;

wherein each element newly made available to the group is initially, for a period of time, used less frequently than the existing element(s) in the group that are already in use to print said image; and

wherein the number of elements in the group available to print is increased as a function of the number of firing pulses sent to the elements of the group.

2.   (previously presented)The method claimed in claim 1, wherein each redundant group is arranged to print a respective row of dots.

3-5.   (cancelled)

6.   (original)   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one element in the group is serviced prior to printing so that it is at least partially operational at the commencement of the print job, printing being commenced using the said at least one serviced element and one non-serviced element, the non-serviced element initially being made available for use less frequently than the said at least one serviced element.

7.   (original)   The method claimed in claim 6, comprising, prior to commencing printing, identifying portions of the array of printing elements which will be needed at least for a first pass of the array relative to the first page of the print job, and servicing printing elements according to the array portions so identified whereby one or more printing elements outside the identified array portions are not serviced.

8.   (original)   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein faulty printing elements, as identified by a faulty printing element database, are excluded from being made available to the group.

9.   (original)   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the array of printing elements extends substantially fully across the page in the first direction.

10.   (original)   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the printer is an inkjet printer and the dot printing elements are inkjet nozzles.

11.   (previously presented)An incremental printer comprising a plurality of printing elements grouped into redundant groups, each group being arranged to print substantially different portions of a given page of a printjob, the incremental printer, when commencing a printjob, controlling at least one redundant group of printing elements such that only a subset of the printing elements in that group are used to print, the incremental printer being further arranged to subsequently increase the number of printing elements in that group which are used to print;

the incremental printer being further arranged, when increasing the number of printing elements in subset of that group, to cause the one or more printing elements, newly included in the subset, to print for a predetermined duration at a frequency lower than that of one or more printing elements previously included in the subset;

wherein the number of elements in the subset of that group is increased in dependence upon the cumulative number of firing pulses sent to the elements of the group during the printing of the printjob.

12.   (original)   An incremental printer according to claim 11, wherein each redundant group is arranged to print a row or column of image data.

13-15. (cancelled).

16.   (original)   An incremental printer according to claim 11, wherein at least one element in that group is serviced prior to commencing the printjob.

17.   (original)   An incremental printer according to claim 11, wherein the plurality of incremental printing elements form a page wide or a page high array.

18.   (original)   An incremental printer according to claim 11, wherein the printer is an inkjet printer and the printing elements are inkjet nozzles.

19.   (previously presented) A printer control circuit adapted to control a printer to perform the method claimed in claim 1.

20.   (currently amended)   A non-transitory computer readable medium containing program instruction which, when executed by a data processing device, control a printer to perform the method claimed in claim 1.